

Survey Shows Million Dollar Energy Increases, Aging Equipment, and Little Investment in Alternative Energy

Deer Park, NY— Friday, U.S. Rep. Steve Israel (D-NY) and Deer Park School Board President Dennis Ryan announced the results of a survey with National Grid examining 17 Long Island school districts' energy costs, usage, equipment and efficiency. The survey found energy expenditures for schools have doubled since the 1999-2000 school year.

"Today, on the last day of the school year for many districts, I'm producing a report card on rising energy costs in Long Island schools, and the Bush Administration gets an 'F' for policies to help schools become more energy efficient and lower school taxes," Israel said.

"The Board of Education of Deer Park has already started to move," Ryan said. "We have an energy commission of our own that we've put together. We believe that it is our responsibility to contain or control the cost of energy within our school districts. It is our responsibility to change the way we use energy and produce energy in our school district and we've started down that road. Having Rep. Israel work side by side with us to help us become a 'green district' is extremely valuable, not only to the tax base of the Deer Park school district, but also to the students, staff and community."

"National Grid applauds Congressman Steve Israel for his leadership and initiative in reviewing the energy consumption and potential efficiencies that can be achieved across schools on Long Island where natural gas is available," said David Manning, National Grid Executive Vice President of External Affairs. "The current price environment puts energy efficiency on the critical list. Limited school budgets must be saved for education, not heating and cooling."

In the Deer Park school district, energy expenditures increased by \$1,358,775 over the last eight years. In the last two years, the spending rose by \$711,989. Half Hollow Hills saw the largest increases. Expenditures rose \$1,683,434 in the last eight years. In just the last two years, their energy spending spiked by \$1,262,633. The average increase in the last eight years among all districts surveyed was nearly \$1 million, and nearly half of that increase happened in the last two years.

The survey found:

- Only one school district is using some form of alternative energy
- Only 16% of school districts are using the most efficient forms of fluorescent lighting
- 45% of the water heaters are more than 30 years old
- Twelve districts are planning to renovate or build new buildings

When asked what the federal government could do to help, Elwood school district said, "Supplement the cost of green products." Sayville school district answered, "Provide necessary funding in order to relieve the tax burden for the community."

The survey found that some school districts are hoping to embrace alternative energy within the next year. Of those who don't currently use any forms of alternative energy, eight hope to make the switch. Six are planning to use solar panels and others intend to use geothermal energy and upgrade buses and hot water heaters.

Rep. Israel has been leading the fight in Congress to spur federal investment in renovating and greening schools. He previously announced federal legislation he authored to provide federal matching funds (up to 50% of a project's total cost) to school district implementing state guidelines through investment in energy efficiency upgrades and the use of renewable energy technology. Legislation passed earlier this month represents an expanded version of this proposal by providing formula funding for schools to engage in green building projects.

The 21st Century Green High-Performing Public School Facilities Act, H.R. 3021, would authorize \$6.4 billion for school renovation and modernization projects for fiscal year 2009, and would ensure that school districts quickly receive funds for projects that improve schools' teaching and learning climates, health and safety, and energy efficiency. The bill includes over \$557 million for physical improvement projects for New York's schools, creating over 9,400 jobs across the state.